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THE GATHERING OF THE STORM IN CHINA.

BY ROBERT E. LEWIS.

CHINA is not a savage land, her people are not barbarians. Her hoary civilization, however, has rusted out, for civil order is, a *sine qua non* in a self-governing, self-respecting State. It is my purpose to deal with lawless occurrences which have taken place in various parts of China during the last two years; which are matters of record, and about which there is no doubt or exaggeration. It might be concluded from these occurrences that all foreigners in China have been in imminent peril. But, in point of fact, the vast majority of merchants and missionaries, whether in port cities or in the interior, have been undisturbed in their rights. Nevertheless, it is also clear from the facts that no one knows when mob violence will stop at his door.

Lord Charles Beresford told us when here, and has since written down, the revelations of incapacity and supineness made to him by the high officials of China. Though this supineness has long been painfully apparent, yet no such official acknowledgment of it has ever before come to light. It shocks one to know that the Prince-President of the Tsung-li-Yamen, the Viceroys ruling Keang-su, An-hui, Keang-se, Hoo-pih, Hunan, Fuh-keen and Sze-chuen provinces, and others, admit their inability to protect foreigners or foreign interests in China. Lord Beresford was led to the conclusion that "there is no real security for commerce throughout the whole of China."

The outrages have not been directed against any one class of foreigners. Arson and murderous assault have been indiscriminately perpetrated upon diplomatists, consuls, missionaries, scientists, customs officers, and business men. Roman Catholic priests and convents, however, have been rather more often the victims of the malice of the people. In travelling in all parts of China many

of these outrages on foreigners have been personally investigated by the writer.

At Shasi, in Hoo-pih province above Hankow, mobs sacked and burned the imperial customs house and residence, the Japanese Consulate, a mercantile stores-ship, and the Swedish mission. The foreigners escaped in boats on the Yangtsze. The riot was, apparently, premeditated and carefully planned. On the same night, four hundred miles from Shasi, placards having called for the expulsion of the "foreign dogs," and the officials doing nothing to prevent outrage, the missionaries escaped from the mobs which held both the roads, and drifted away in a rowboat.

Near Peking, the chief engineer of the Imperial Railway, an officer of the British Legation, and a major of the English army, while inspecting a portion of the new railway, were attacked by Chinese soldiers, badly bruised, and left in a bleeding condition. Soldiers also attacked Mr. Dunston's house, and, killing one servant, looted the place. At Mentze, in Yun-nan, the French consulate was recently plundered, and the imperial customs burned to the ground.

The province of Sze-chuen was, in 1899, for months in a state of anarchy, and the officials in a state of innocuous desuetude. The rebellion of 8,000 men, headed by Yu-Man-tze, had for its express purpose the driving out of the foreign "dogs and goats." The brigands attempted to extirpate the Christians of the province. Father Fleury was captured by Yu-Man-tze, and, during the eight months of his captivity, was carried from place to place, and wherever Christians were found Yu had them brought before Father Fleury and murdered at his feet. Such instances as the following have been the order of the day in Sze-chuen. At Shun-ching, the mission house was torn to pieces, the mission buildings razed to the ground, the missionary hunted for his life. At Hopao-chang, the mission was looted, the chapel burned, two priests captured, two servants killed, one Christian family plundered. At Ho-chow, the buildings of the mission were burned; at Kwei-fu the mission ruined. The city of Keang-peh is across the river from the open port of Chung-king. A new dispensary had been opened, and two Chinese medical students were temporarily in charge of it. The place was looted and one student was killed. "The powerlessness of the mandarins at such a crisis is really astonishing, and one is forced to ask if they are just as powerless

as they appear to be." Lord Charles Beresford was told that Yu and his followers had burned four thousand houses and thirty chapels; that over 20,000 Catholics had been set adrift, and property destroyed to the extent of \$4,150,000. This amount is undoubtedly over-stated, however.

An example of what such a state of affairs has meant to the individual may be seen in the case of Mr. Parsons, of the Church Missionary Society. He left Chun-king to go back to his post at Pao-ning, with an escort of four soldiers. In crossing a river in a ferryboat, he saw a body of troops on the opposite bank. They raised the cry, "Kill the foreigner." When the boat reached the bank his escort fled, and the boat was overwhelmed by soldiers belonging to Yu-Man-tze. Mr. Parsons was attacked with swords and knives, and, though he could swim but little, he threw himself into the river. Catching at a floating bamboo, he kept his head above water, and drifted with the stream, while the soldiers followed in a boat, prodding at him in the water. At length he got on board of a Chinese gunboat and was saved. But the officers and men of the gunboat showed no opposition to the rebels or their murderous assault, and did everything short of violence to keep him from getting on the boat.

Passing from Sze-chuen to Kwei-chow province, we must refer to the murder, on the public highway, of Mr. Fleming, of the China Inland Mission, and of the Chinese evangelist who was with him. "The evidence received from Kuei-yang proves that the murder was deliberately planned by the gentry and officials," and yet the demand of the British Minister at Peking that the governor of the province be degraded, was flouted. At the city of Pao-ching-fu in Hunan, last September, a missionary called at the prefect's Yamen. A mob of between four and five thousand men assembled and demanded the foreigner. He escaped at the rear in a boat. But the mob, in their attempt to get him, pulled down the first buildings of the Yamen's court. Penetrating to the inner court with lighted torches, they fired the great edifice of two hundred rooms, and plundered the chests in the treasury of \$14,000.

In the north of An-hui, Ho-nan, and Keang-su provinces, there has been a serious armed rebellion. The walled cities of Shu-chou, Meng-cheng, Meao-erchi, and Ku-yang were besieged and fell. Niu, the leader, butchered about two thousand men, women and children at the capture of Ku-yang. The city gates of Hsu-chou

were "decorated with several hundred queues and scalps"—the Red Indian style of civilization! It is believed that over 50,000 people lost their lives in this rebellion, which was in the Yangtsze basin, as was also the one in Sze-chuen. In An-hui province, Mr. Cook, manager of the Pochishan coal mines, had trying times. Two hundred natives tried to hang him, and, failing in that, to throw him down the shaft of the mine. After a desperate struggle he escaped.

The working of silver mines near Ningpo has been fraught with danger. The Fenghua magistrate decided to settle matters with the town of Sun-gao. The result was that his soldiers were disarmed and imprisoned by the townsmen, the official himself was nearly stripped of his clothing, and his official chair was added to a bonfire. The foreigner in charge of the mine fled to the country. The course of the miner in China is a turbulent one.

The province of Shan-tung has been much disturbed during the year. Missions were burned, the houses of Christians pillaged, the Christians were harried, persecuted and murdered. Three Germans, officers and gentlemen, were murderously set upon by an unprovoked mob, and they saved themselves only after shooting down some of the rioters. Foreigners in the midst of this upheaval wrote: "The local officials are powerless to punish the offenders." "There is practically no guarantee for the safety of the lives and property of foreigners residing in the interior of China." This state of affairs resulted in German troops seizing and occupying a walled city or two, a hundred miles from the coast of Shan-tung. Their treatment of the Chinese was drastic but salutary, and as a result, order is being restored.

Still another open rebellion—this one in Southern China—has been quieted with difficulty. In Kuang-se province, about 7,000 men were in arms. The cities of Yung-hsieu and Peilin were "pillaged and dismantled," and many other places were laid low. The proclamation of one Chang is significant of the objective of this rebellion: "I, Chang, obeying the orders of Heaven to gather all the braves and heroes together, with a special view to seek revenge for the people, to drive away the foreign devils, and to protect China, have assembled over 300 philosophical scholars, about 3,000 military officers, and more than 30,000 brave soldiers." And a whole province in South China was under their sway for several months.

Turning from Southern China, I must refer to the region on the Yangtsze of which I-chang is the port city. Here rioting was mostly directed against the Catholic Christians. Chapels were burned, Christians robbed and their lands wrested from them. One priest, followed by 1,000 converts, travelled to I-chang for safety. The bandits had this legend on their banners: "Destroy the foreigner and advance the dynasty." They meant what they said, as the story of young, accomplished Father Victorian shows. This Belgian priest was located about 100 miles from I-chang. The bandits wrecked the mission, murdered the Christians, captured Victorian and hung him to a tree. "As this poor man hung from the tree to which he was tied, pieces were cut from his thighs and eaten by his tormentors. . . . Finally his body was cut open, from the chest to the bottom of the abdomen; he was disembowelled, and the various organs were taken out and eaten by these semi-civilized people, who at the same time drank his blood. He was also mutilated in a way that cannot be described, and his head was cut off." This was penned by a person at I-chang who saw Victorian's body.

And, later on, comes the premeditated assault on the missionaries of the Church Missionary Society at Kien-ning, in Fu-keen province, near where the massacre occurred a few years ago. At Kien-ning the mob destroyed the church, the mission house, the dispensary, the leper asylum, looted the hospital, and beat the brains out of an aged Christian, throwing another Christian into a well. The officials gave Dr. Rigg and his associates no protection whatever, though the city had been placarded for several days to the effect that the foreigners were to be killed. Following the attack on the mission, bills were freely posted, in the name of the *literati*, calling on the people to "rise and kill every foreigner," and urging that the native Christians should be "hunted down like wild beasts or highway robbers, and rooted out until not one remains."

We return again to the consideration of the situation in North China. United States Minister Conger told me, a few months ago, that he was really apprehensive for the safety of Americans in Shan-tung and Chi-li. Since that time, the Righteous Harmony Fists have extended their organization, large numbers of soldiers and others have joined their ranks. The whole Manchu military force in Northern China is said to be in sympathy with them.

The Rev. Mr. Brooks has been murdered, hundreds of Christians have had their houses burned, while many have been killed in cold blood; portions of the Lu-han and the Tientsin-Peking railways have been torn up, and marines have been landed from the available ships of war.

I have written enough, though not all. What are some of the deductions? (1.) The instances cited have occurred in twelve out of the eighteen provinces of China; it is therefore not a local condition. (2.) These attacks have been made on all classes of foreigners. Foreigners were to be killed or driven out. (3.) The missionaries suffer most, because, according to treaty, missionaries only have the right to reside in the interior. (4.) Of attacks on missionaries, two-thirds, or more, are directed against Roman Catholics.

The Treaty of Tientsin (article VIII.) says: "Persons teaching or professing it (the Christian religion), therefore, shall alike be entitled to the protection of the Chinese authorities; nor shall any such peaceably pursuing their calling, and not offending against the law, be persecuted or interfered with." Does it need more proof than has been adduced to show that this treaty protection is often without force? I know of no case of assault or pillage or murder where the Chinese authorities have lodged the claim that the foreigner thus maltreated had broken over his lawful rights. They confess negligence and attempt to make reparation, but that does not restore life? No missionary in China deserts his work for fear of outbreaks. Merchants do not look with favor on risks which are quadrupled and trade which is constantly disturbed. But the question which, we believe, deserves attention is this: What is to happen if civil order continues to become more chaotic, and the incompetence of the Chinese government is still more disgracefully shown? There are over one thousand missionaries in China. The American vested and business interests there are also great. Should there not be a clear national policy as to what America will, or will not, do to meet the catastrophe into which China is fast drifting? This is a question not of partition, but of civil and treaty rights. As long as China is treated as a "going concern," the line of operations is easily seen; but what is to happen when the government is recognized as a gone concern? That day seems to be approaching.

Shanghai, China, May, 1900.

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